

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 COME-00 OMB-01

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L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8638

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4459

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM PINT RH SF

SUBJ: RHODESIA: SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA FOCUS ON RHODESIA

ARMY ISSUE

1. THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS TODAY, AUGUST 29, CARRIES REPORTS FROM LUSAKA EMPHASIZING THE DEMANDS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS FOR DISBANDMENT OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY. DIPLOMATIC SOURCES ARE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE UK-US PLAN CALLS FOR A PHASED DISMANTLING OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD WITH "SOME ELEMENTS TO BE INCORPORATED IN A NEW TERRORIST-BASED DEFENSE FORCE." ONE ARTICLE QUOTES SOURCES "CLOSE TO DR. OWEN" AS SAYING MUGABE AND NKOMO ARE STILL PREPARED TO TALK AND "WHAT IS REALLY AT ISSUE IS THE MECHANICS OF DISMANTLING THE RHODESIAN ARMY."

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2. TODAY'S PAPERS ALSO CARRY EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH IAN SMITH ON HIS AIRCRAFT ON THE WAY BACK TO SALISBURY FROM HIS PRETORIA MEETING WITH VORSTER AUGUST 27. SMITH REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD "GIVEN US THEIR BLESSINGS AND THEIR HOPES FOR A SETTLEMENT. WHETHER IT IS AN INTERNAL

SETTLEMENT OR EXTERNAL SETTLEMENT, THE SOUTH AFRICANS
LEAVE IT TO OUR BEST JUDGMENT. THIS IS A DECISION
WHICH SHOULD BE MADE BY RHODESIANS."

3. ASKED ABOUT VORSTER'S REACTION TO REPORTS THAT AN
OUTSIDE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WAS PART OF THE SETTLEMENT
PROPOSALS AND THAT RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES WOULD HAVE
TO BE DISBANDED, SMITH SAID "I DON'T THINK OUR DIS-
CUSSIONS HAVE INTRODUCED ANYTHING NEW TO THE SITUATION.
SUCH A SUGGESTION WOULD BE IN CONFLICT WITH THE
UNDERSTANDING WHICH I MADE WITH DR. OWEN AT THE
COMMENCEMENT OF THIS EXERCISE. IF DR. OWEN DOES PUT
FORTH SUCH A SUGGESTION, CLEARLY THIS PRESENTS ME
WITH A NEW SITUATION WHICH WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER."

4. MEANWHILE, SALISBURY STORIES QUOTE SITHOLE AS
SAYING HE WAS NOT COMMITTED TO INTERNAL ATTEMPTS TO
FORM A MULTI-RACIAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE SMITH REGIME.
SITHOLE REPORTEDLY SAID SUCH MOVES WERE FRAUGHT
WITH DANGERS AND HIS ORGANIZATION WOULD LOOK VERY
CRITICALLY AT THE TERMS WHEN THEY WERE OUTLINED
BY THE GOVERNMENT.

5. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, SITHOLE WENT ON TO SAY THAT
IN TRYING FOR AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, SMITH COULD
BE SEEKING TO ESCAPE THE "LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES" OF
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THE ANGLO-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT INITIATIVE. SITHOLE
SAID HE CONSIDERED THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS
TO BE OBJECTIVE.

6. COMMENT: WITH THE OWEN-YOUNG VISIT IMMINENT, IT WOULD
APPEAR SITHOLE, DESPITE THE RECENT EVIDENCE OF HIS
ATTRACTION TO THE PROSPECT OF PARTICIPATING IN
AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE
HIS BARGAINING POSITION AND TO AVOID GIVING THE
IMPRESSION HE BEARS ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENCOURAGING
SMITH TO REJECT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND TAKE
THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT ROUTE.
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